(c) the alternative steps taken to ensure petrol, diesel and kerosene supply to those district till alternative arrangments are made; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) and (b) There are 64 retail outlet dealerships and 17 SKO/LDO dealerships, selection for which, is required to be made in Orissa including cyclone affected Districts in Orissa. Government has also decided to open a retail SKO dealership in each Development Block of the country under the Prime Minister Self Employment Scheme. Under this, Scheme 314 retail SKO dealerships will be opened in Orissa.

(c) and (d) The cyclone affected districts were served from the existing dealers and distributors of the areas.

Special Drive to Check Adulterated Fuel in Delhi

1633. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 380 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 2nd December, 1999 and state:

(a) whether Government launched a drive in November, 99 to check adulterated fuel in Delhi; and

(b) if so, outcome of this drive?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A Joint Team comprising officers of oil companies and other carried out surprise checks of retail outlets from 11.11.99 to 27.11.99 in Delhi. A special drive was launched by oil sector marketing companies on directions of Government from 29.11.99 to 3.12.99 to check adulteration of fuel in all States including Delhi. During these drive cases of irregularities were detected and action has been initiated against the dealers as per procedure.

Price of Petroleum Products

1634. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the cost of Petroleum in the world market is around $ 25 per barrel;

(b) what will be the effect of this on the price of Petroleum products in India; and

(c) what measures Government have planned towards energy conservation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) Yes, Sir. The prices of major marker crude oil viz Brent crude oil has been trading around US $ 25 per barrel during the month of November, 1999.

(b) As per the present policy of the Government, the ex-storage point price of diesel is fixed on import parity basis. Accordingly, a change in the price of diesel in the world market is reflected in the price of diesel in the country also.

(c) Government has taken the following measures towards petroleum conservation:

(i) Reduction in the flaring of Associated Natural Gas produced with crude oil;

(ii) Reduction in the fuel losses in the refineries; and

(iii) Conservation measures taken through the Petroleum Conservation Research Association for efficient use of energy in the industrial, transport, agriculture and domestic sectors.

Off Loading of Gail's Shares

1635. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government propose to off-load its stake in Gas Authority of India Ltd. through GDR route;

(b) what has led the Government to off-load its shares; and

(c) how has Government ensured that it is off-loading its stake at the proper price?